

KANSAS SENTINEL

March 2010

Volume 1, Issue 1

Official Magazine Newsletter of
the Kansas Army National Guard

*Flag of
Honor
Tours
Capital City*

*Soldier and
NCO of Year
Named*

*Promotion Boards Held
Changes coming*



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On the cover: Spc. Dru Payne carries the Flag of Honor as it is escorted by members of the Shawnee County Sherriff's Department and the Topeka Fire Department Honor Guard, enroute to being posted above Fire Department headquarters.

Photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD

Inset: Sgt. Chase Taylor takes off running during the 12-mile road march portion of the Solder and NCO of the Year state competition held at the Kansas Regional Training Institute.

Photo by Spc. Angie Mooneyham, 105th MPAD



The Kansas Sentinel is an authorized, official publication of the Kansas Army National Guard. The Kansas Sentinel is published to provide command and public information to specific audiences about the Kansas Army National Guard and its Soldiers at home and deployed abroad.

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Commander's Call!



Brigadier General John Davoren
Assistant Adjutant General, Kansas
Land Component

I appreciate the efforts of all the members of the Kansas Army National Guard (KSARNG) as we continue to support multiple operations within Kansas and around the world. We are approaching the end of one of the harshest winters in decades and our state and nation continues to work through the economic crisis.

Our units continue to conduct pre-mobilization, mobilization, and reset operations as well as maintain the readiness of the KSARNG. Our personnel manning and unit strength numbers are of critical importance for Kansas and the National Guard. We continue to have soldiers with the right training and equipment to meet the needs of our state and nation.

We will see the results of our efforts to provide predictability in deployments while building relationships with other nations as our second set of personnel take over the Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) mission in Afghanistan. The 2-137th Combined Arms Battalion will begin pre-mobilization training soon as they become our first group of soldiers to conduct operations in the Horn of Africa.

The requirements for ready units means we must also improve our individual readiness. Each of us will participate in training, such as weapons qualification and the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT),

starting this month. Personnel who need to attend professional development courses should

do so as soon as possible.

All of these events will result in your own personal development and the development of a more effective and professional team within the KSARNG.

To all the leaders of the KSARNG, we must ensure that we set and enforce standards in our units. We must set the example for our soldiers as we demonstrate that we follow the Army values. There are areas where we still need to improve but we will work on those together. All of us must be committed to doing our best every day and looking for ways to improve every day in the future.

*The requirements for
ready units means we
must also improve our
individual readiness...*

Sergeants Time...



**Command Sergeant Major
Glenn Peterson**
**State Command Sergeant Major,
Kansas Land Component**

I am truly honored to have the opportunity to provide my comments for the inaugural edition of the Kansas Sentinel. The Kansas Sentinel is the newsletter of the Kansas Army National Guard and is a great tool to tell our stories. I know that there are many unit events and outstanding achievements by our Soldiers that go unnoticed. You and your units do things on a daily basis from individual training, unit training, recruiting & retention events, deployments, disaster relief missions to community service/relations. The Kansas Sentinel newsletter is the media to showcase just what you and your Soldiers do for our State and Country during the year. Any Soldier can provide a story. Do not feel intimidated, you do not have to be a Unit Public Affairs Officer to have an article published in the newsletter. I challenge each and every one of you to capture a story and inform the rest of the Kansas Army National Guard on just what your unit and Soldiers are doing throughout the year. We as Soldiers do many amazing things and it is time to tell our story! I am proud to serve you and hope you take the pride in your unit and our organization by telling us your story!

A note from the editor....

The Soldiers and Officers of the 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment are proud to bring you the Kansas Sentinel. It is intended to be a command information tool for the Assistant Adjutant General, Army; the Command Sergeants Major and a tool whereby your stories can be told.

Every day someone in the Kansas Army National Guard is doing something of note. We want to hear those stories and be able to

share them with your fellow Soldiers. As Command Sgt. Maj. Peterson said above, the Sentinel is the medium for you to share your story with the world.

If you have stories to share, ideas or photos of interest, you can send them to me at: phillip.witzke@ng.army.mil or phillip.witzke@gmail.com or on the web at kansassentinel@gmail.com



Flag of Honor Tours Capital City

Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke,
105th MPAD

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 are forever indelibly imprinted on the minds and hearts of Americans as they watched in horror as the United States came under attack from a then unknown enemy.

The symbol of freedom that Americans rally around has always been the United States flag and after the terror attacks of that day, nothing could be truer. Flags were posted in the rubble of the Twin Towers, hung over the remains of the Pentagon and flown from homes and businesses across the nation as a symbol of hope and renewed patriotism.

In the days that followed the attack, a flag was gifted to Chris Heisler from the Texas House of Representatives. He then helped organized the largest police convoy in history, headed to Ground Zero taking many mementoes of support, to include the Flag of Honor gifted him from the state of Texas. This one United States flag flew over ground Zero and a suggestion was made that this flag continue to fly in support of our heroes. Heisler subsequently enlisted in the Army and

this flag has flown in Kuwait, Qatar and Iraq with other American Soldiers in combat zones. Upon seeing the flag flying among the soldiers in Iraq, spectators would soon fondly refer to this flag as one of honor. So, this flag is now fondly referred to as the United States Honor Flag. (The Honor Network)

Since 2001, the Honor Flag has paid tribute to those who have lost

As part of the Kansas Honor Guard, Spc. Dru Payne and Sgt. Jessie Lawrence are accustomed to handling flags and administering honors, but for them, this flag is special and embodies everything that they hold dear as Americans.

"It was amazing" said Spc. Payne of her chance to escort the Honor Flag. "Holding that flag reminded me of the events that have changed

so many lives," she said. "It represents hope. It tells me we are still the good guys."

"It is an indescribable feeling" said Sgt. Jesse Lawrence. "It gives me goose bumps just talking about it. Escorting this flag will be something I remember for the rest of my life."

The flag schedule is orchestrated by The Honor Network and transported by American Airlines. As part of their duties, the duo drove to Kansas City International Airport to facilitate the honorable transfer from American Airlines pilots and the military and then escort the flag back to Topeka where it was flown over the fire department and presented as part of Topeka RoadRunner's Military and Service Personnel Appreciation Night.



Sgt. Jessie Lawrence and Spc. Dru Payne unfurl the honor flag between members of the Topeka Fire Department Honor Guard and the Shawnee County Sheriff's Office escort detail, in preparation of its posting above the Topeka Fire Department Headquarters during the flag tour of the city.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD

their lives in the line of duty, both military and civilian. This flag made its way to the Kansas Capital recently and was escorted by members of the Kansas Honor Guard as it was posted at the Topeka Fire Department headquarters and was presented to the community during a Topeka RoadRunner's hockey game.



Top: Sgt. Jessie Lawrence holds Honor Flag, ready for presentation to additional Service Personnel.

Top Right: Sgt. Jessie Lawrence and Spc. Dru Payne fold the Honor Flag.

Above: Spc. Dru Payne straitens the edges of the Honor Flag after folding.

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD

“It is a huge honor for the Topeka RoadRunners and the Kansas Expocenter to be able to bring such an important and sacred part of American history to the capital city,” said team owner Don Stone. “We are dedicated to this community and are so proud that we can honor the military and service personnel in such a special and unique way.”

Those who escorted the flag were also given the opportunity to place a special memento in the carrying case that the flag is housed in, marking its trek across the county and its significance to those who have escorted it.

“I ripped the Kansas Honor Guard tab off of my uniform and placed it in the box,” said Payne. “I can’t think of a better representation. We are responsible for honoring fallen heroes both past and present and for me, that was a representation of all of those that we have honored. This flag represents everyone that has served and is a reminder of the sacrifices we have all made,” Payne continued. “It reminded me why we do this. It is something that I will carry with me when I deploy to Iraq with my unit.”

Lawrence, a combat veteran who served in Iraq with the 731st Transportation Company also placed a significant memento into the case. Lawrence removed his former combat service insignia from the 82nd Airborne, which has great significance not only from his service, but also represents a family member of a close friend who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. “I can’t think of a better honor than placing my combat patch in the box” he said. “Since I have been home from Iraq I have never taken it off my uniform. Placing it in that box was the most significant thing I could do because of who and what it represents.”

The Honor Flag and its mementoes will be enshrined in the Smithsonian Museum later this year where it will go on permanent display at the National Archives.

Taylor, Wyres

take top

honors



By Spc. Angie M. Mooneyham, 105th MPAD

As the final night of the competition drew to a close, a lone soldier frantically assembled a 249 Bravo amongst the shadows cast from the dim head lights of a GSA van. Slumped inside, were the remaining soldiers exhausted from the previous days, yet anxious for the morning hours to arrive with the announcement of the NCO and Soldier of the Year Award.

The Non-Commission Officer and Soldier of the Year competition were held simultaneously at the Kansas Regional Training Institute, Salina, Kan, for

Above left: Sgt. Chase Taylor runs during the 12 mile ruck march.

Above: Spc. Kyle Wyres performs a functions check on his 50-cal.

Photos by Spc. Angie Mooneyham, 105th MPAD

four days from Nov. 5, 2009 to Nov. 8, 2009. Command Sgt. Maj. Glenn Peterson was the Senior Command Sergeant Major overseeing this year's event.

"The NCO and Soldier of the Year competition, is a process that we use to just have board appearances



Spc. Colton Carlson of the 995th Maintenance Company places a mine simulator during the Soldier of the Year competition.

Photo by Spc. Angie Mooneyham, 105th MPAD

and ask questions. For the last three to four years the have made it event driven and board driven,” said Peterson.

To qualify for the either competition, each Battalion conducted their own preliminary boards to determine a representative, along with an alternative, who then competed at the state board, said Peterson.

Soldiers who battled for the Soldier of the Year were: Spc. Colton Carlson, 995th Maintenance Co., Spc. Roberto Ravelo, 1-108th aviation Echo Co., Spec. Michael Collins, BTRY B 1-161FA, Spec. Kyle Wyres, 772 MAC EN Co., and for NCO of the year, Sgt. Taylor, HHC-Det. 1, 2nd 137th Infantry and Sgt. Ladewig, A BTRY 1-161FA.

The soldiers had begun the competition with a little friendly rivalry amongst one another for the highest scores in numerous events starting from the moment they in-processed, followed immediately with a standard Army Physical Fitness Test, and concluded the day with a 25-question exam and essay.



Above: Spc. Roberto Ravelo, Echo Company, 1-108th Aviation Battalion, extends his lead in his record setting road march. Ravelo completed the twelve mile course in two hours, thirty minutes.

Left: Spc. Colton Carlson takes aim on the zeroing range during the Soldier and NCO of the Year competition held at the Regional Training Institute held in Salina.

Photos by Spc. Angie Mooneyham, 105th MPAD

Day two, the longest and most challenging day for most soldiers and their feet consisted of a 12 mile road march. Soldiers were allotted three hours to complete the march while carrying a 35-pound 'ruck' sack (backpack) and a standard Army issued M-16 rifle. Ravelo completed his march in a record time of two hours and thirty minutes.

As the day continued with a quick lunch and a fresh change of bandages for the blisters, the Soldiers completed a seven-point course along with land navigation.

Weapons, weapons and more weapons were in store for day three, as the soldiers traveled to the range. The soldier's mission was not to qualify, but to zero their M-16 and to hit the most targets then their fellow soldier.

Then on to the special event, where the soldiers demonstrated their warrior tasks by dragging a 180-pound dummy and strategically firing at a target with



an M-16 and 9MM pistol while running a designated course.

Once the special event was concluded, the soldiers were tested on their overall knowledge of weapons by disassembling, trouble shooting and reassembling numerous weapons ranging from a 50 Cal to a 9MM.

Competitors then had to explain and demonstrate how to capture and detain a hostage, were quizzed on their familiarization of combat life saving techniques and demonstrated how to ignite a mock claymore.



Above: Sgt. Ladewig, A Battery, 1-161 Field Artillery, performs a functions check on a M-16 that he reassembled during one of several special events on the NCO of the Year competition.

Left: Sgt. Chase Taylor looks for confirmation from judges as he assembles a 50 caliber machine gun as part of the special events category of the NCO of the Year competition.

(Photos by Spc. Angie Mooneyham, 105th MPAD)

Finally on day four, the competition concluded with a Class A Board inspection and the announcement of this year's NCO and Soldier of the Year recipients; Sgt. Chase A. Taylor, Non-Commission Officer and Spec. Kyle Wyres, the Soldier of the Year Award.

Both soldiers will once again compete tirelessly through the blisters and the brass for the regional titles at The Louisiana Regional Training Institute in June 2010. Soldiers from Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma will contend for the chance to advance to the National Guard Bureau competition, If successful, they will then content for the Army Soldier and NCO of the Year.

Promotion "Super Board" Convenes

Changes announced for FY11

Spc. Angie M. Mooneyham,
105th MPAD

The Kansas Army National Guard's annual Enlisted Promotion Board (EPS) was held at the Kansas Regional Training Institute, Salina, Kan, for three days from Feb. 5 to Feb. 7, 2010.

Each year this "Super Board" is held to review the files of Soldiers eligible for promotion to the ranks of Sergeant through Sergeant Major. Qualified Noncommissioned Officers of the grade E-6 and above are chosen to be board members in charge of grading promotable Soldier's files based on documents verified by their 4100s such as: DA photo, awards, trainings and education. Along with an additional score estimating the Soldier's potential to improve in these areas.

These scores are combined to create a subjective score which is validated by having each Soldier's file graded by three different board members, whose scores must remain within a 100 point window of each board member's score.

This score is not the only determining factor to your overall points towards promotion, said Sgt. 1st Class Beverly Claycamp, Joint Force Headquarters, Topeka, Kan.

Claycamp adds this score is combined with points a Soldier may have accumulated through administrative points, such as Army Physical Fitness Test, qualifications, trainings and education which all comes from the Soldier's 4100.

What is a 4100 and why is it so important to your career? A "4100" is actually the NGB Form 4100-1-R-E and is the number assigned to the promotion worksheet. This form contains all of the pertinent information you need to go to the promotion board. On this form you find all of the points that go into the administrative promotion point equation. You get a maximum of 75 point in each of the following categories: Awards and Decorations; Weapons qualifications, post secondary education, self development,

resident training (military school excluding NCOES); time in grade and time in service, for a maximum of 600 possible pre-board points. In other words, you control these points; most of them. The board then has 400 discretionary points to award based on performance, etc...for a max promotion total of 1000 points. For more information on how points are awarded, consult AR 600-8-19.

Once the board process is completed, a promotion list is then composed using

the total of both points from the board and the administrative points to create a promotion sequence number, which is assigned by seniority and vacancy of desired 'slot' within each Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) for the following twelve months. Basically, the high score in each grade and MOS takes sequence number one, and then on down the line.

This year the board members reviewed 980 promotable Soldier's files compared to approximately 1200 files the previous year, according to Staff Sgt. Cheryl Larson, Joint Force Headquarters, Topeka, Kan. The

See SUPERBOARD, Page 20



Staff Sgt. Dane Baker, Company D, 108th Aviation Battalion reviews a service record during the annual promotion board held recently in Salina.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD

Soldiers, Airmen Visit Nation's Capital

A record number of Soldiers and Airmen recently visited the nation's capital on a trip that included both professional development seminars and trips to legislative offices on Capitol Hill.

Hosted by the National Guard Association of the U.S., 38 members of the Kansas Army and Air National Guard trekked to the National Guard Memorial, which is home to the National Guard Association. There, service members were briefed on issues the association was advocating on behalf of all Guardsmen. Those Soldiers and Airmen would later have the opportunity to carry some of those concerns to Capitol Hill when they visited with Representatives and Senators from their respective districts.

"This legislative visit was to learn the process of introducing legislation and having it presented to our congressional delegation to get benefits, equipment and dollars for the National Guard," said Lt. Col. Mike Erwin, Secretary for the Board of Directors of the National Guard Association of Kansas. "We educated people on the process that our membership within the National Guard Association, both

enlisted and officer, can get involved in to help guide our elected officials and give them information that they need to make informed decision as they are voting for legislation that helps us out," Erwin continued.

Indeed, that is the purpose of the Association and the reason it was founded some 130 plus years ago by a group of volunteer officers and veterans of the Civil War, both north and South. Meeting in Richmond, Virginia, they discussed "matters of practical reform which would make the Militia a more effective instrumentality in our system of National Defense."

Their military experiences had demonstrated the importance of a trained Militia, and they in turn sought changes that would again make the Militia a key element in America's defense. They would later meet again in St. Louis, MO where they would rename the organization the National Guard Association.

Since then, the National Guard Association of the U.S. (NGAUS), which is a private organization permitted to lobby Congress on behalf of its members, has been champion-



Lt. Col. Mike Erwin greets Sen. Sam Brownback in his office during legislative visits.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD

ing issues on behalf of all guardsmen. The association is responsible for many of the benefits guardsmen take for granted today. For example, they were instrumental in having the National Guard recognized and funded as a reserve of the Army; attained drill pay for guardsmen; fought for and won federal retirement pay for the National Guard; gained year-round commissary access and then fought for and attained unlimited access to the exchange (PX/BX); attained federal education benefits and VA Home loans. In the years since September 11, 2001, the NGAUS has been instrumental in the instituting of the Civil Relief Act, which protects mobilized Soldiers and Airmen, as well as in gaining TRICARE Reserve Select and low-cost health care. That is a short list of some of the significant accomplishment the National Guard Association of the U.S. has achieved on behalf of all National Guard members.

"NGAUS is really the only association that represents both Army and Air," said Lt. Col Tony DeJesus, Maintenance Group Deputy Commander, 190th Air Refueling Wing, and member of the Board of

Director of both the Kansas and National associations. “When I say association, I am really talking about the military coalition; both Army and Air, enlisted and officer,” DeJesus continued “that represents the National Guard, whether it be state or national, on issues whether it is medical, equipment or personnel issues.”

“Obviously, people in the Active Duty don’t always support programs for the National Guard, even though we are equal to them when it comes to deployments,” DeJesus said. “However, when it comes back to home station, a lot of people go back the traditional M-day positions and we don’t get the same benefits. We don’t get the same medical benefits; we don’t get the same benefits that the active duty gets. That’s a sad fact that we don’t get the same benefits,” he added. “As the 54 states and territories we can get together and we can go to our congressmen.”

By law, Congress is mandated to support the National Guard, as they are to provide for each State Militia. The National Guard is that militia. Section eight of the Constitution says that Congress has the responsibility “To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia (National Guard) ... and the authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress.”

Congress has prescribed that the National Guard be funded and recognized under the Army and Air Force (a benefit that NGAUS established in 1903) and what



Lt. Col. Tony DeJesus shares a moment with Sen. Sam Brownback in his Washington, D.C. office while on legislative visits.
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke

the association does in general, is ensure that the National Guard gets what it needs, or equal treatment, by having a group that can lobby Congress on their behalf, much the same way that the Association of the U.S Army and the Air Force Association does on behalf of their active duty components, according to DeJesus.

“Years ago, you used to get a little pink card and were told you can only go to the commissary or PX/ BX twelve times a year and during your annual two weeks; that’s it,” DeJesus said. “The military coalition, the Enlisted Association actually, was the one who chaired this to the National Guard Association and now we have 365 accesses. It was just recently, within the last ten years, that that legislation got passed. So those kinds of things like that, that benefit the Army and Air National Guard Soldier, are not just thought up and given to us. Those are things we have to fight for to get. Its stuff now that we take for granted.”

According to Erwin, the real purpose behind the visits is to make face to face contact with our elected officials so that those officials know what is important to the Guardsmen and women. It informs and educates the Guard members who go on the trips how the process works and how they can more effectively get what the Guard needs to accomplish its mission.



Kansas National Guard Enlisted Association President Elect Sgt. 1st Class Kurt Wassenberg (left) and President Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Appenfeller pose on Capital Hill with National Guard Association of the United States Chairman of the Board of Directors Maj. Gen. Tod M. Bunting.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD

"We get to meet the elected officials, but more importantly, we get to meet their military legislative liaisons. Those are the guys that really dive into the meat of the legislation," Erwin said. "In the few years that we have been doing these, we are seeing the benefits of them just in the contact that we have with the staffs when they have added stuff like milcon (Military Construction) dollars, we have had input on that; adding equipment dollars for equipment, we have been able to give a good quality input into the process."

What that equates to, according to Erwin, is replacement of or better equipment for Soldiers to train on when they come to drill as well as improved facilities and overall quality of life.

"They may not see any benefit from it today," Erwin stated, "but they will in the future because the equipment is coming in. We have got HUMVEEs; we've got better equipment to train on so when they come in to drill they have the equipment that they need to train on. In the future, with the milcon dollars, they are going to see that our facilities are improving; that they are being modernized and that they will have better quality training because of it."

According to Erwin, issues don't just happen, they bubble up from the grassroots level, from Soldiers

on the ground. Those then are championed by the state associations at the lower state level and if multiple states are encountering similar issues, that is something that can be then championed to Congress by the national level asso-

"Soldiers need to get involved. We are stronger in numbers...if we go in to Congress and we have one hundred percent of the Kansas National Guard who have joined into the association, that sends a big voice."

Lt. Col Mike Erwin

ciation.

"Soldiers need to get involved," Erwin said. "We are stronger in numbers. If you go back to the cold war, one of our big things of being a strategic force was that the bigger the National Guard was the more reserves we had to throw into the fight. It's the same way with this," he continued, "the more people we have as members of the associations, the more people we have to throw into the fight. If we have one person going in and asking our congressmen for something, it doesn't carry much weight. But, if we go in and we have one hundred percent of the Kansas National Guard who have joined into the association that sends a big voice. When our younger members have something

that is important to them, and it might be hard for a junior person to say retirement, for instance, is an important issue for them. But, one day 20 or 25 years down the road that is going to be an important issue. It is what they do today that can affect the kind of retirement benefits and what kind of retirement program they have when it is time for them to collect their benefits."

To find out more about the National Guard Association of the U.S., or to become a member, visit their web site at www.NGAUS.org or for Kansas www.NGAKS.org For the Enlisted Associations visit www.NGEAUS.org or for the Kansas Association visit www.NGEAKS.org

***Be sure to keep
up with the Plains Guardian
and the Sentinel
as we cover the
Kansas National
Guard Association
Annual Convention
next month***

Marriage enrichment helps create strong bonds, resilient families

Spc. Stephanie Hodges,
105th MPAD

Kansas National Guard (KSNG) Soldiers have roles and missions that are complex and since the events of 9-11, guard deployments have increased noticeably. They are continuously called upon for quick reaction in the event of natural disasters, requiring a soldier to leave their house, home and family abruptly. Additionally, Extensive, repeated separation and the high-threat nature of military life can sometimes create a tremendous strain on military families, and more specifically, military marriages.

The extraordinary stress on families has not gone unnoticed within the Kansas National Guard and programs are currently being employed to help lessen these tensions. Chaplain (Capt.) John Potter, KSNG Joint Support Chaplain,

heads up the Strong Bond Marriage Enrichment Program that is geared towards strengthening relationships, inspiring hope and rekindling marriages. This program allows couples to reconnect and receive the tools and resources needed to promote martial confidence, satisfaction and better communication.

“When we go to war we have rules of engagement and how to fight in the combat zone. No one has written a book on how to fight when you’re at home or under your

own roof,” explained Chaplain Potter. “We need to discuss that beforehand, so some ground rules need to be in place to help any military couple weather the storm - the Strong Bonds program helps military marriages manage the storm.” Marriage Enrichments prime objective is to establish effective communication between couples to allow for a stronger marriage, stronger family and ultimately a more resilient soldier. Potter explains that this program gives soldiers more peace of mind at home and on the battlefield.

When you go down range you don’t come back the same person. No matter how much you think you will, you won’t, so you have to deal with the changes of yourself and be able to link the changes and solutions to your marriage as well.”

Staff Sgt. David Strange

“A deployment is going to go better if you know your marriage is solid,” said Potter.

According to Chaplain Potter, surveys showed that 93% of those who went through one of these strong bond events said that they noticed improvements within their relationships. The developments are made through an intricate curriculum of one-on-one and group activities, aimed to introduce ideas on better communication, building greater trust, commitment, forgiveness and

maintaining friendship within the relationship.

“It was a lot of reminders that we needed,” said Stephanie Strange, a participant at the January Marriage Enrichment in Kansas City, MO. “Some things we already knew, but like anything else we tuck them away, you get caught up in life, kids, work and all the other demands, and you forget your priority is your marriage This was an opportunity to get back to what brought you together, to rediscovery and reestablish those things.”

Furthermore, there are specific classes dedicated to the affects of deployment, ways to better prepare, plan, and gauge the unknown difficulties encountered before, during, and after the tour of duty.

“When you go down range you don’t come back the same person,” says Stephanie’s husband Staff Sgt. David Strange of the Kansas Army National Guard (KSANG) who has been

on two separate deployments in the past. “No matter how much you think you will, you won’t, so you have to deal with the changes of yourself and be able to link the changes and solutions to your marriage as well.”

Potter explains that normally these retreats are geared towards units that are about to deploy or units that have just returned from deployment. However, the program is available free of cost for all

See ENRICHMENT, Page 20

KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD LEADERS ATTEND GATES SPEECH

By Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th MPAD

Key leaders in the Kansas Army National Guard attended the speech given by Secretary of Defense, Dr. Robert M. Gates, when he was presented the Distinguished Kansan of the Year Award in Topeka on January 29, 2010, by the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas. During his highly charged and emotional speech, the attendees were impressed by the frank, honest and sometimes humorous words that Secretary Gates verbalized.

The night revealed numerous political leaders that were present to honor Secretary Gates, such as the former governor of Kansas and current Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, Kansas Governor Mark Parkinson, U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, and U.S. Representative Todd Tiahrt, to name a few. But they weren't what the attendees came to see or hear, they wanted to hear what Secretary Gates had to say.

Kansas Army National Guard Chief of Staff, Col. John Andrew, was one of the first of the leaders to say how impressive a speaker Secretary Gates was.

"I was surprised on how down-to-earth he was," said Andrew. "He was not the dry, political speaker I expected. His speech really impressed and motivated me, and I was very pleased to find out that his Kansas common sense still seems to be with him, even after all the years he's spent in Washington, D.C., away from his home state."



U.S. Secretary of Defense, Dr. Robert M. Gates receives a proclamation from Kansas Governor Mark Parkinson that states he is the recipient of the Distinguished Kansan of the Year Award.

Photo by Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th MPAD

Gates acknowledged Kansas's 149th Birthday when he accepted the Distinguished Kansan Award and kept the audience's rapt attention with his speech, speckled with humorous anecdotes, such as the comparison to Topeka and Washington, D.C.

"In Topeka," said Gates, "unlike Washington, you are unlikely to see a prominent person walking down Lover's Lane holding his own hand. Washington, after all, is the place where those traveling the high road of humility encounter little heavy traffic."

Col. Robert Windham, the commander for the 635th Regiment has witnessed Secretary Gates speak before and said he was still very pleased to listen to the Secretary of Defense speak again. "It is impressive to see a cabinet member give such a heartfelt and emotional summary on their native roots here in Kansas," said Windham. "You could tell the love he has for Kansas and really come to understand him in the honest and emotional way he delivered his speech. I really enjoyed what he had to say."

Kansas State Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Haworth said Secretary Gates' speech

Leaders attend Gates' speech

From previous page



Senator Sam Brownback discusses Secretary Gates' speech with Kansas Army National Guard members (from left) Kansas Representative (R-47) Col. Lee Tafanelli, commander of the 69th Troop Command, Col. Robert Windham, commander of the 235th Training Regiment, State Command Sergeant, Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Haworth, and Joint Force Intelligence Directorate, Lt. Col. Scott Henry.

Photo by Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th MPAD

was one of the most touching he had ever witnessed because he realized the close ties that he and Secretary Gates share.

"It's ironic," said Haworth, "to find out how small a world it is. I never realized it before, but his family had relocated to Pratt, Kansas, where he was raised, so he is like a neighbor. I suppose a lot of those kids named Gates I went to school with are his relatives. It makes me feel good to see that even if you are from a small town, such as Pratt, and you live in a state that most of the world thinks is a non-descriptive state, such as Kansas, that with hard work, education and drive, you can be a major good influence in how our country is governed and benefit our society to become better and more idea."

To view Secretary Gates' speech in its entirety, visit website; <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1415> and for photos of the event please go to the Adjutant General's website: <http://www.Kansas.gov/ksadjutantgeneral/index.htm> where you can see more, and download a copy of the current Plains Guardian publication.



Come and enjoy this unique opportunity to attend three conferences in one!!! The State Family Program Training and Awards Banquet, Enlisted Association of Kansas, and the National Guard Association of Kansas have joined their conferences. The conference opens Friday evening; separate sessions will be available Saturday morning. What about the children? Bring them along. Childcare is available for children 5 years old and younger. The National Guard Youth Coordinator has organized a great day of training for children ages 6 to 17. Space is limited. Registration is mandatory for activities to be planned. Our spouses will enjoy a trip to McConnell, complete with lunch and a fashion show. For more information or to register visit them on the world wide web at: ngaks.org

SOLDIERS HONORED BY INDUCTION INTO SAINT BARBARA SOCIETY

By Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th MPAD

On Jan. 9, 2010, at the Broadview Hotel in Wichita, Kansas, the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery (FA) of the Kansas Army National Guard held its annual Field Artillery Ball and Saint Barbara's Celebration—a military honor society of the United States for both the U.S. Army and U.S. marine Corp. The award is named for Saint Barbara, patron saint of artillerymen.

"We do this every year," said Lt. Col. Thomas Burke, commander of the 1-161 FA, "to honor those Soldiers and spouses that have shown outstanding attributes that contributed to the field artillery, and have exemplified the qualities desired in being an artillery-

man or woman."

During the ceremony, Spc. Michael Collins was recognized as the Best Individual Soldier, while Sgt. Gregory Torres was identified as the Best Individual NCO for the Battalion in 2009. Battery A was identified as having the Best Gun Section for the past year. Then the recognition for artillery members that exemplified the finest traditions and highest standards of the field artillery were inducted into the honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

Those inducted were: Maj. Gen. Wayne Pierson; Maj. Paul Scofield; Sergeant 1st Class Kenneth Cline, Staff Sgt. Jon Depiesse; Staff Sgt. David Franco; Staff Sgt. Michael Garcia; Staff Sgt. Terry Hillyer; Staff

Sgt. Jason Jouret; Staff Sgt. John Lofing; Staff Sgt. Brian Reed and Staff Sgt. Michael Yandel.

Special recognition was given to Ronnie and Connie Bachman, who accepted awards on behalf of their son, Sgt. 1st Class Travis S. Bachman, who was killed in action in Iraq on August 1, 2007.

The next item on the agenda was to induct members into the order of Molly Pitcher. The Molly Pitcher award is to recognize the service and support of spouses to the Kansas Guard member.

Those inducted were: Mrs. Tammy Alsup; Mrs. Rebecca Boese; Mrs. Marilyn Brumley; Mrs. Amanda Joan Cline; Mrs. Kristine Depiesse; Mrs. Rebecca Mattix; Mrs. Bonnie McGhee; Mrs. Amy Rijfkgel and Mrs. Robin Witzke.

Besides the Mayor and his wife Cathy, distinguished guests for the evening were 35th Infantry Division Commander, Maj. Gen. Wayne Pierson and his wife, Margaret; 35th Infantry Division Assistant Commander, Brig. Gen. Alex Duckworth and his wife, Kelly; and Retired Brig. Gen. Ron Tincher and his wife, Judy;

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Above: Lt. Col. Thomas Burke hangs the medal reflecting the induction of the Order of Saint Barbara around Staff Sgt. Michael Yandel's neck



Left: Amanda Joan Cline, makes her way through the Saber Percolate to the stage where she was awarded the Order of Molly Pitcher for her support of the Field Artillery ideology.

Photos by Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th MPAD

Lowe's Expands Support of the Military with Year-Round Discount

10 Percent Discount for Active, Reserve, Retired and Disabled Military Personnel and Immediate Family Members

MOORESVILLE, N.C.--(EON: Enhanced Online News)--Lowe's Companies, Inc. announced today it will expand its support of the military by offering an all day, every day 10 percent discount to all military personnel who are active, reserve, retired or disabled veterans and their family members, with a valid, government-issued military ID card.

"The year-round discount program is one way we are reaffirming our commitment to the thousands of men and women who are serving throughout the world, as well as their family members at home."

All other military veterans will receive the discount on the Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Veterans Day weekends.

"Lowe's was founded on the heels of World War II by veterans Jim Lowe and Carl Buchan and has always been a supporter of the military," said Larry D. Stone, Lowe's president and chief operating officer. "The year-round discount program is one way we are reaffirming our commitment to the thousands of men and women who are serving throughout the world, as well as their family members at home."

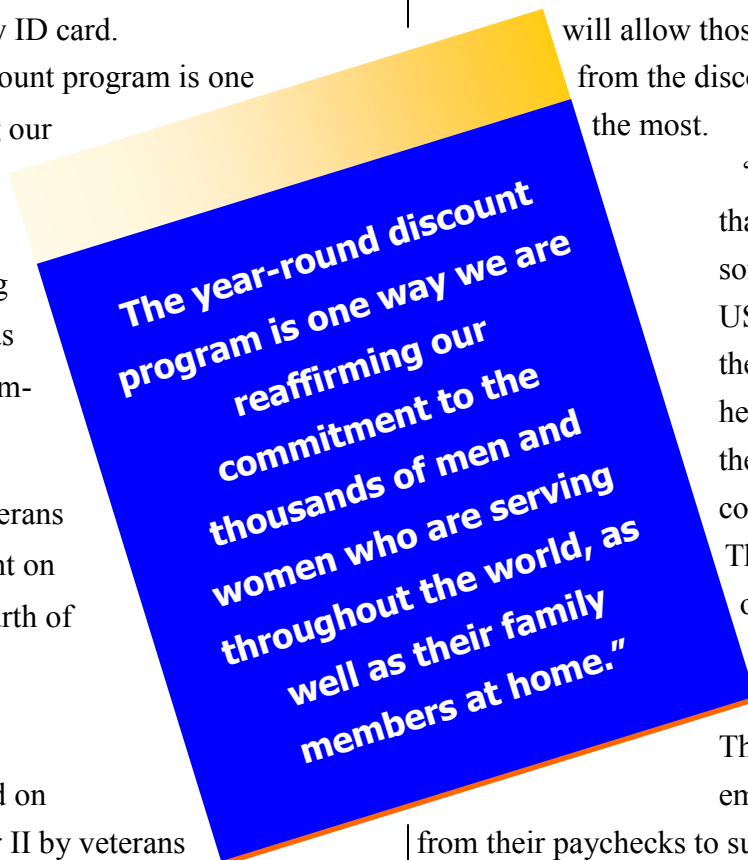
The discount is available on in-stock and Special Order purchases up to \$5,000. Excluded from the discount are sales via Lowes.com, previous sales, and purchases of services or gift cards.

While Lowe's has had a military discount program in the past during select times of year, the new policy will allow those who are serving to benefit from the discount whenever they need it the most.

"What a great way to say thank you," said Sloan Gibson, president and CEO of the USO. "We salute Lowe's for the company's commitment to helping military personnel and their families who served and continue to serve our nation." The USO was also selected as one of the beneficiaries of the Lowe's Employee Giving Campaign in January. This initiative allows Lowe's employees to donate directly

from their paychecks to support those who are serving our country.

In addition to offering military discounts at specific times during the year, Lowe's has extended benefits for its employees serving in the military and offers employment opportunities to military personnel after their military service has ended. Currently, more than 12,000 Lowe's employees are military veterans or reservists.



Williams joins Family Program Office

- shares knowledge and experience

Michelle Williams is the newest addition to the State Family Program Office. Michelle came on board in January as the Kansas Family Readiness Assistant (FRA). Her job is included in the web of support that is offered to our military members and families. Her duties include working with the Family Readiness Groups (FRGs), military contacts, rear detachments, and volunteers to provide training and hands-on assistance for establishing and maintaining an effective Family Readiness system within the units and commands.

Michelle comes from a solid background in the FRG. Michelle started her years of volunteerism in 2004 and served as a FRG leader during her husband, Lon, deployment to Afghanistan in 2006. She worked diligently to keep those families informed and connected during this mobilization.

This brought Michelle's ability to the forefront when Lon deployed for a second time to Iraq. This

second deployment with the 287th brought a correlation of soldiers from different units. Michelle's success from the first deployment made her an ideal candidate for the Co-Leader position with the 287th's deployment.

Michelle served in this role for several months, until the 287th hired Michelle as their full-time Family Readiness Assistant in January of 2008. Michelle then focused on getting every family and soldier within that unit contacted and connected with all the information she gathered from her military contacts. Michelle ensured phone trees were established and used, as well as trained new volunteers to develop the FRG to a new level.

Michelle and her husband Lon reside in Topeka with four of the six children. The children have even continued on in the military tradition with one of them returning from a recent deployment to Iraq with the Marine Corp.

Dunn joins Chaplain Team

I will keep this initial article brief...more of an introduction for those of you who may not know me. For the next year or so, I will serve you in the role of the KS Joint Force Support chaplain. It will not be an easy task to cover for CH John Potter, whom I have learned much from since coming on active duty on January 4. He has served our Kansas guard members and their families with untiring energy and diligence, and I only hope that I can provide similar levels of care for you while he goes on yet another deployment. I know that you will join me in keeping CH Potter and his unit in our thoughts and prayers as they carry out the mission(s) assigned to them, and for their safe return next year.

I am no stranger to many of you. I served in the Kansas Army National Guard as a member of the 1-127th Field Artillery and briefly with the 920th Medical Detachment from 1979 to 1985. After a twenty year and three month break in service, the doors opened for me to return as a chaplain in 2005. I completed the Chaplain Officer Basic Course in early 2006 and began drilling with my assigned unit, the 891st Engineering Battalion. In early 2008 I was

command directed to deploy with the 287th Sustainment Brigade in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. We returned home last September from that mission. I am currently still involved with both the battalion and brigade level unit ministry for the 891st and the 287th.

My father, Col. Robert E. Dunn, Retired, served for well over 30 years in the Kansas National Guard, as did my brother Gary. Another brother, Stan also served for 20 years. My son, Nathan, continues the family tradition and is set to deploy soon with the 2-135th to Iraq. I've enjoyed nearly 26 years of marriage to my wife Janie. In addition to Nathan, we also have three other children: David, who serves in the USMCR, and completed an Iraq deployment in 2008; Alisha, a senior in high school; and Rachel, our late life blessing, who is just short of her second birthday.

I look forward to meeting, and perhaps working with, many of you in the months ahead. I'm proud to serve with you as a member of the Kansas National Guard. Please let me know if there is anything I can help you with. May God bless you and your families!

CH (Capt.) Richard Dunn

Super Board and Changes

From SUPER BOARD, Page 9

process appeared to function more efficiently and smoothly compared to the previous year, said Larson.

Command Sgt. Maj. Glenn Peterson, Senior Command Sergeant Major assisting this year's board, reported changes are forth coming for next year.

While the promotion worksheet is still good for enlisted promotion to E-5 and E-6, there will be a new promotion system in place in fiscal year 2011 for senior noncommissioned officers E-7 and above.

The National Guard Bureau has announced changes to the promotion system for senior NCOs. No longer will administrative points (those 600 points in eight categories) be available. All points will be discretionary. According to the memorandum published in early January, the new National Guard Automated Board System will be implemented and is mandatory for all states in FY 11. The new 4100 (NGB Form 4100-1B-R-E) worksheets for senior NCOs can be

viewed at <http://www.ngbpdcc.ngb.army.mil/default.htm>.

This form gives NCOs a method to be considered by the board, verifies progression in their military occupational specialty and allows them to select driving distance options.

Peterson says that under new guidelines, a Soldier's administrative points will no longer be considered for the overall score and only the points accumulated through the board will count towards promotion.

In addition, the length of time-in-grade a Soldier serves in a designated rank will be increased from a minimum of one year to two years.

Peterson said he feels the increase in time-in-grade is an important change allowing Soldier to have more time in a designated rank to improve on their leadership skills and personal growth as a Senior Non-Commission Officer. The promotion list was released March 16.

Enrichment

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military couples within the Kansas National Guard. "No matter the length or current status of the relationship, the ideas taught are for all phases and sorts of couples," said Potter.

Other participants agree. SFC Clint Goheen of the KSANG and his wife Mary, who have been married for 34 years, explained that even the simplest of information can be applied in different ways and made relevant for any couple. "There was so much good and useable information. It was basic information that anyone could use. I really believe there is a large percent of people and marriages that would be helped by this program."

For more information contact Joint Support Chaplain Assistant Sgt Mike McClellan at (785) 274-1514 or email at mike.mcclellan@us.armymil. For Kansas Air National Guard information contact Chaplain Terry Williams at terry.williams@an.af.mil.

Soldiers Inducted into St. Barbara Society

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Col. Michael Dittamo and his wife, Karen; Col. Tim Marlar and his wife, Karen; Col. Michael Cheek; Retired Colonel Butch Dowse and his wife, Marilyn; Lt. Col. Dave Johnson and his wife, Jennifer; Chief Warrant Officer Keith Rogers and his wife, Lori; Warrant Officer Robert Lutz and his wife, Lupe; Command Sergeant Majors Jack Elliot and his wife, Betty; Dale Putman and his wife, Judith; Viviano Revelles; Lynn Saathoff and his wife, Linda; retired George Stevens and his wife, Karyl; Ray Vanek and his wife, Doris; First Sergeants Warren Duseau and his wife, Mary; Luther Keith and his wife, Claudia; Stanley Otis and his wife, Loretta; Ed Poley and his wife, Vedonna; Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Kinstad and Sgt. 1st Class Richard 'Dick' Stoops and his wife, Ruth.

Photos of the event can be viewed at www.kansas.gov/ksadjutantgeneral on the Kansas Adjutant General's website.